

May 28, 2020 – Weill's *Street Scene*

Kurt Weill's "American opera" *Street Scene* opened on Broadway on January 9, 1947. With a huge cast of singers and actors, it's rarely been revived outside the opera house, since many of its roles require voices equally at home in Puccini or Verdi. Having been forced to leave his native Germany in the 1930s, the composer of *Three Penny Opera* and *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* reinvented himself on Broadway with *Knickerbocker Holiday*, *Lady in the Dark*, and *One Touch of Venus* before returning, albeit briefly, to grand opera.

Street Scene takes the inhabitants of a crowded tenement building during one particular oppressively hot summer day in New York City and lets us see them as individuals: the gossipy women who lean out of their windows to watch everyone passing by; Sam Kaplan (tenor **Jerry Hadley**) and Rose Maurant (soprano **Angelina Réaux**), young and in love and frightened to death of what the future holds; Rose's father, Frank (bass-baritone **Samuel Ramey**), who passionately loves his wife Anna (soprano **Josephine Barstow**) but knows she is having an affair with the milkman; the black janitor Henry (baritones **Ben Holt** and **Bruce Hubbard**), who lives in the apartment house with the white people, but has his own dreams as an outsider; Mrs. Buchanan and her nervous husband who are having a baby; Jenny, coming home from her graduation, et al.

John Mauceri conducts the Scottish Opera Orchestra and Chorus in this 1991 Decca/London recording.

From a Lexington Opera production, here's the delightful "Ice Cream Sextet":
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bh8sYgzNFWE>.

As a bonus, we'll hear German chanteuse **Ute Lemper** sing three songs from Weill's 1941 show *Lady in the Dark*.

Next Thursday, June 4th, please join me for a 1964 recording of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* (*The Magic Flute*), a fairy tale masking a Masonic allegory, with **Fritz Wunderlich**, **Evelyn Lear**, **Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau**, **Roberta Peters** and **Franz Crass** in principal roles. **Karl Böhm** conducts..

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Bob Chapman

W. Robert Chapman, Host of the WCPE Opera House